

35. A near-field optical head according to claim 34; further comprising a light source disposed on a top surface of the slider above the through-hole so that a light path is defined by the light source, the through-hole, and the microscopic aperture.

36. A near-field optical head according to claim 1; further comprising a through-hole formed in the slider and terminating in the microscopic aperture; a light shielding layer covering the through-hole except for the microscopic aperture; and a light source mounted on a top surface of the slider above the through hole so that a light path is defined by the light source, the through-hole, and the microscopic aperture.

37. A near-field optical head according to claim 19; further comprising a through-hole formed in the support member and terminating in the microscopic aperture.

38. A near-field optical head according to claim 37; further comprising a light shielding layer covering the through-hole except for the microscopic aperture.

39. A near-field optical head according to claim 38; further comprising a light source disposed on a top surface of the support member above the through hole so that a light path is defined by the light source, the through-hole, and the microscopic aperture.